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Maryland Commission *for Women*

Advancing Women's Economic Security in Maryland: State Policy Approaches to Improve Pay Equity

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Pay Equity: Progress has stalled

Maryland Women In 2024

Paid **88.6 cents** for every dollar men make

Earned **\$9,093 less** per year than Maryland men in median earnings



If the wage gap closed for 1 year

Maryland women could afford:



7 Months of Rent



5 Months of Health Insurance Premiums



11 Months of Childcare or



to pay off student loan debt
6x faster than average

THE GENDER WAGE GAP: COMPARABLE JOBS, DISPARATE PAY (STATE OF MARYLAND, 2024)

PREDOMINANTLY FEMALE PROFESSIONS (ON AVERAGE)



HEALTHCARE
SUPPORT WORKERS

\$41k



TECHNOLOGISTS
AND TECHNICIANS

\$54k



OFFICE AND
ADMINISTRATIVE
WORKERS

\$54k



SERVICE WORKERS

\$41k

VERSUS

PREDOMINANTLY MALE PROFESSIONS (ON AVERAGE)



PROTECTIVE SERVICE
WORKERS (FIREFIGHTERS
AND LAW ENFORCEMENT)

\$79k



SALES WORKERS

\$67k



MAINTENANCE AND
REPAIR WORKERS

\$61k



CONSTRUCTION
WORKERS

\$55k

**IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY:
UNDERVALUED OCCUPATIONS**

PREDOMINANTLY FEMALE PROFESSIONS RECEIVE **SUBSTANTIALLY LOWER PAY** COMPARED TO SIMILAR PREDOMINANTLY MALE PROFESSIONS. THESE FEMALE-DOMINATED JOBS ARE **UNDERVALUED** GIVEN SIMILAR EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.





Maryland

#47

home care workers' pay
compared to livable wages

Healthcare Occupations:

Support workers,
Technologists &
Technicians



U.S. Industry

\$4.3 trillion

Wage growth is not keeping pace

Maryland Women

86% Healthcare support workers

77% Technologists & technicians

~121,000 women employees

Top Vacancy Rates

38% Licensed Practical Nurses

23% Nursing Assistants

17-21% Technicians

Policy Approaches:

Economic health of Maryland women
&
Healthcare workforce pipeline

Maryland Commission for Women Employment
Equal Opportunities Women's Rights
Career Pathways Programs
Empower Women Pay Transparency
Pay Equity History Advocates Progress
Change Determination
Equal Pay Equality
Raise Wages Maryland Women
Strengthen Collective Bargaining Rights
Women of Color Occupational Crowding
Healthcare Support Occupations

Career Pathways and Advancement



GRANTS AWARDED



**Gov. Moore Announces \$5.2M in EARN
Maryland Grants to Help 2,000+
Marylanders Train for In-Demand Careers**

- Ladder & pathways programs to **increase earnings** and **healthcare employment**
- **Offset costs:** loan repayment programs, salary increases, tax credits, paid leave
- Addition to Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland

Minimum Wage for Healthcare Workers

- California
 - Phased approach passed in 2024
 - \$25 minimum wage for healthcare workers
 - 1.5x state minimum wage
- Reduced turnover/staffing improves **quality care, shorter hospital stays, and reduced mortality rates**

2026 California Healthcare Minimum Wage (Phased Approach)

\$25

Large Health Systems, Dialysis Clinics
& Large Counties

\$23

Medium Sized Facilities

\$22

Community & Rural Health Clinics

\$19.28

Safety Net Hospitals

Source: State of California Department of Industrial Relations

Strengthen Collective Bargaining Rights

Unions are effective at reducing income inequality.

- Union women make **22% more** on average with **better benefits**
- Hispanic or Latino union women earn **\$15,392 more per year**
- Maryland: only **12.7%** unionized

Strengthen Collective Bargaining Rights

- ☐ Require employers to recognize unions that leverage the **card check process** to demonstrate majority interest
- ☐ Include home childcare and healthcare workers with public employees when supported by public funds
- ☐ Allow public workers to **strike**
- ☐ Extend **unemployment insurance benefits** to striking workers
- ☒ **Pass trigger laws** to protect workers' rights under NLRA at the state level in case federal labor laws are dismantled or not enforced.
- ☐ Increase the maximum fines for employer violations of workers' rights and allow affected workers to sue for damages



Any Questions?

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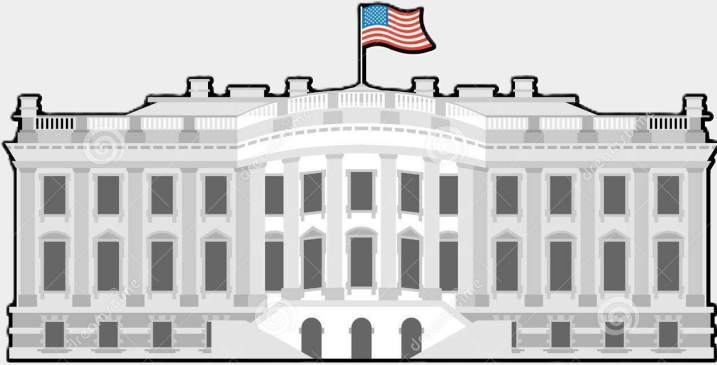
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Appendix

Impact of Current Events

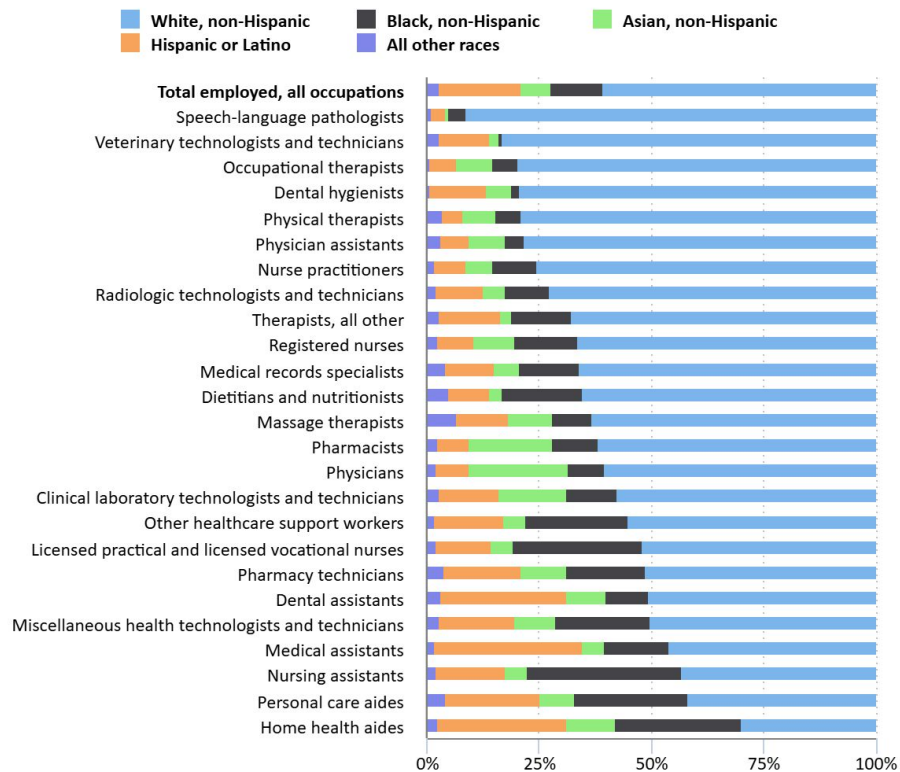
Maryland women face **disproportionate** impacts from unprecedented federal government layoffs and anti-DEI efforts.



- The federal government is Maryland's **largest employer** with over 250,000 civilians and over 200,000 contractors in the state (prior to **cutting ~25,000 Maryland jobs** last year)
- Women account for 46% of the federal workforce but are **overrepresented** in departments and agencies targeted for **massive layoffs**
- Women federal workers also have seen greater pay equity, earning **95 cents** for every dollar men earned (2024) compared to a national average of 81 cents per dollar

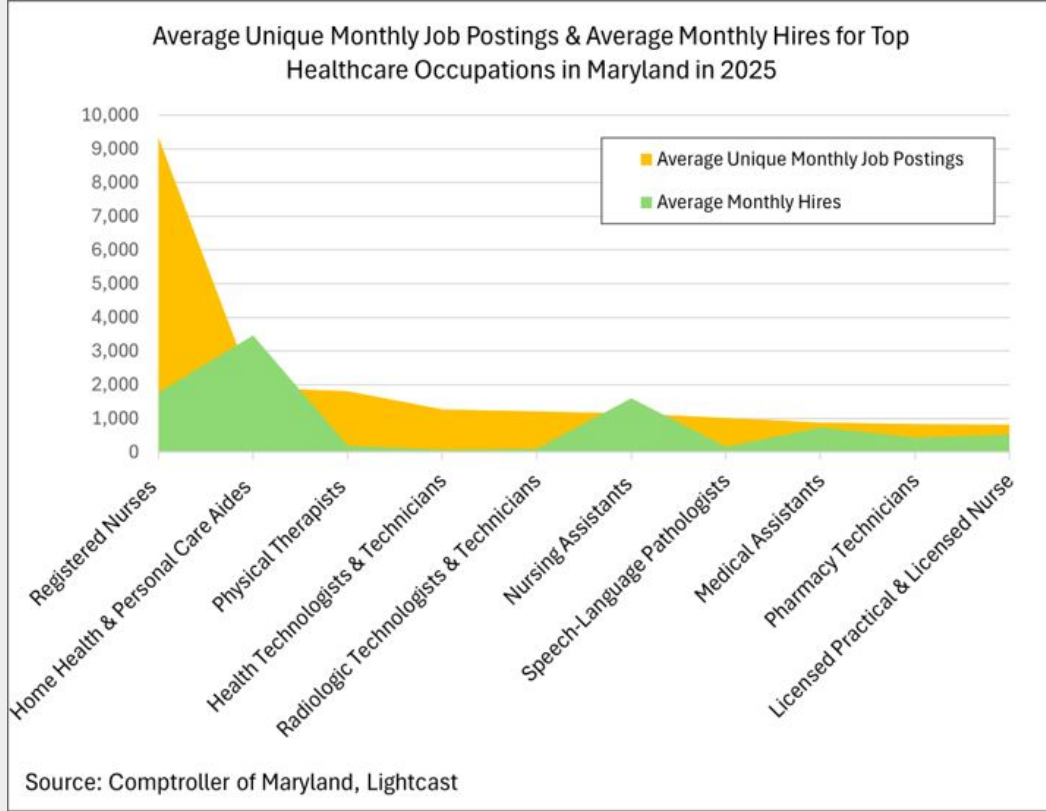
Efforts to raise
healthcare
support wages
would benefit
historically
minoritized
women.

Percent of employed people 16 years and older in the 25 largest healthcare occupations by race, 2022



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



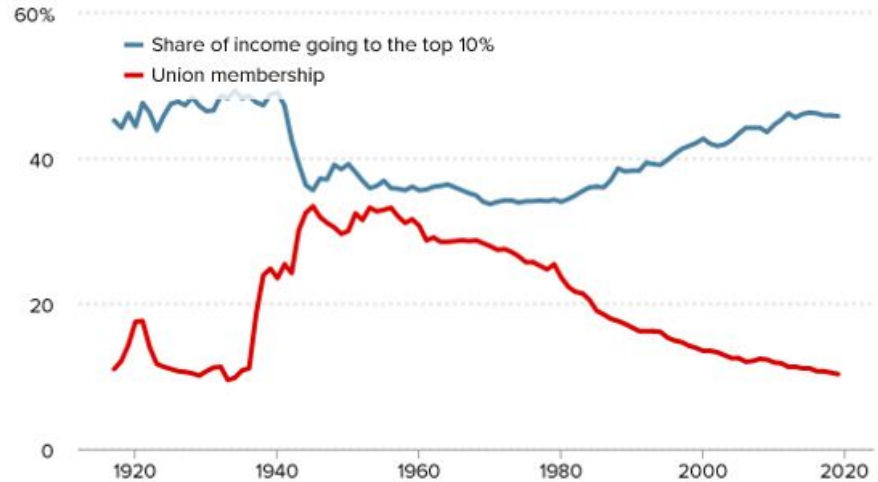


Healthcare staffing shortages in Maryland are most dire for nurses and home health aides.

Collective bargaining can be a powerful tool to combat pay inequities and reduce income inequality.

As union membership declines, income inequality increases

Union membership and share of income going to the top 10%, 1917–2019



Source: Reproduced from Figure A in Heidi Shierholz, *Working People Have Been Thwarted in Their Efforts to Bargain for Better Wages by Attacks on Unions*, Economic Policy Institute, August 2019.

Economic Policy Institute

Strengthen Collective Bargaining Rights

Right to Form a Union

- **Card Check:** signed authorization cards to **show majority interest** in unionization
- **Easier to organize** a union through **petition**
- **Require recognition** like Illinois, Vermont & New Mexico

Right to Strike

- Allow **public workers** to strike
- **Unemployment insurance** for striking workers like New Jersey, New York, Oregon & Washington
 - **Fair negotiation**

Enforcement

- Weak **enforcement** structures
 - Federal NLRB & state PERB
- Resources
- Greater fines

Actions & Legislation in Maryland

Laws Enacted

- Career Pathways for Healthcare Workers Program in 2022
- Maryland Commission on Public Health 2022 task force & established body in 2023
- Homecare Workers Employment Act of 2024
- Maryland Worker Freedom Act of 2026

Bills Introduced

- H.B. 1492 Collective Bargaining - Public Employees - Revocation of Certification and School and Library Employees' Right to Strike

The Maryland Commission for Women could advocate for legislation to:

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- ☒ **Pass trigger laws** to protect workers' rights under NLRA at the state level in case federal labor laws are dismantled or not enforced.
- ☐ Increase the maximum fines for employer violations of workers' rights and allow affected workers to sue for damages

Increase Wages for Healthcare Workers

- ☐ Set a **higher minimum wage for healthcare workers** that is a livable wage (\$26) or 1.5x the state minimum wage (\$22.50)
- ☐ Implement **wage pass-through policies** alongside Medicaid reimbursement rate increases

Invest in Healthcare Career Pathways and Advancement

- ☐ Partner with employers and trainers to develop an **industry-wide healthcare career pathway program** that streamlines multiple advancement ladders targeting initial support roles that require similar worker skills
- ☐ **Offset workers' costs** for these programs through incentives like paid leave, requirements tying completion to salary increases, and funding for wraparound services